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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: GUIDANCE REQUEST:THE WAY FORWARD ON MANDATE
GENERATION AND REVIEW

1.(U) This is a guidance request (See para 7). On March 17, 2008, the Co-Chairs (New Zealand and Namibia) of the Informal Plenary on mandate review will re-convene a meeting of the informal plenary. The purpose of this meeting is for the Co-Chairs to receive Member States' reaction to the preliminary analysis that was circulated to Member States during the previous meeting of the Informal Plenary on February 27, 2008. The proposed US. reaction to the Co-Chairs preliminary analysis is contained in para 7.

2.(U) Background and Summary. On September 17, 2007 the GA adopted an oral decision to continue consultations in the Informal Plenary on Mandate Review. The President of the General Assembly (PGA) designated New Zealand and Namibia as Co-Chairs of the Informal Plenary. Beginning in 2007, the Co-Chairs have engaged in consultations with Member States and the Secretariat to develop a methodology for the review that would allow for a fact-based analysis of mandates, and that will provide a framework for organization of information in a way that is accessible. The Co-Chairs began their work with an analysis of the 279 mandates in the humanitarian assistance cluster.

3.(U) Since the end of December 2007, USUN has met with the Co-Chairs at the Ambassadorial and working levels. In these meetings with the Co-Chairs USUN stressed the importance of establishing a framework in which Member States will be provided with objective, detailed and professional analysis from the Secretariat. In this regard, USUN suggested an approach as developed and presented in reftel, wherein Member States will examine programs and activities as opposed to specific mandates, with a view towards identifying gaps, inefficiencies and duplications in these programs and/or activities. Unfortunately, the Co-Chairs did not incorporate elements of this approach in their methodology.

4.(U) The Co-chairs are instead relying on analysis of mandates and information from the respective implementing entities within the Secretariat. Notably the Co-Chairs have not been able to enlist assistance of third-party entities such as the OIOS, the Department of Management (DM), or any other branch of the Secretariat to provide objective analysis and/or information of these mandates and activities. The Co-chairs' have made multiple requests for consultations with the UN Controller and the USG for Humanitarian Affairs without any success. Openly frustrated, the New Zealand permanent representative, Rosemary Banks, reported March 12, 2008 that without Secretariat willingness to assist or provide budgetary data, the process would lack credibility. The methodology developed by the Co-Chairs is therefore dependent on the assumption that implementing entities within the Secretariat will engage in a serious and thorough analysis of their own mandates and activities and will subsequently highlight areas of redundancy, overlap or inefficiency in their own Departments.

5.(U) On February 14, 2008, the Co-Chairs provided a briefing to explain their methodology and to provide their preliminary analysis of the mandates in the humanitarian assistance cluster. At this briefing USUN stated that while it was cautiously optimistic about achieving substantive results, recognized the difficulty inherent in developing proposals for the consolidation and elimination of mandates that would be acceptable to all Member States. Accordingly, USUN stated its intention to support the efforts of the Co-Chairs and to provide the Co-Chairs with any necessary assistance. On February 28, 2008 the Co-Chairs presented their preliminary analysis of the humanitarian assistance cluster and requested reactions from Member States. At this meeting, Ambassador Mark Wallace stated that while the US was concerned about the slow pace of mandate review, the Co-Chairs' framework was constructive and reasonable. Wallace also took the opportunity to remind Member States that out dated and mandates were a strain on scarce resources and the UN budget. The Co-Chairs will re-convene an Informal Plenary on mandate review on March 17, 2008 to receive reactions to their preliminary analysis of the mandates in the humanitarian cluster.

6.(U) On a parallel track, the Four Nations Initiative (4NI) on Governance and Management at the UN was launched by Chile, South Africa, Sweden and Thailand in 2005 to assist efforts of Member States and the Secretary General to improve governance and management of the UN. Since its formation, the 4NI has identified over 30 proposals to build trust among Member States and Secretariat, implement accountability and transparency measures for the Secretariat, Funds and Programs, reform mandate generation, reform budget process and reform management of human resources. Among these 4NI proposals are the three following recommendations on mandates:

4NI Proposal 1: We propose that Member States consider, to the extent possible, drafting mandates more clearly, in order to facilitate preparation of the relevant RBB frameworks and to increase the ability to hold the Secretariat accountable for implementation. Elements to be considered include:

- Timeframes for implementation and results
- Expected outcomes and indicators to measure these;
- Monitoring systems,
- Criteria for determining when a mandate has been completed.

4NI Proposal 2: We propose that the Secretariat develop a management tool whereby after the adoption of a legislative mandate the Secretariat would ensure the responsibility for implementation is assigned and accountability mechanisms are put in place.

4NI Proposal 6: We propose that the evaluation and feedback process in the Secretariat be strengthened so that the knowledge of previous failure and success will be used in the preparation of new mandates for improvement and accountability. This includes improvement of the quality of reporting and introduction of a system to ensure integration of results into the accountability framework. To this end the necessary resources for proper evaluation and self-evaluation should be included in the budget and Member States should ensure that the Secretariat is provided with sufficient resources to carry out this crucial task.

At a March 12, 2008 policy forum hosted by the 4NI, the above proposals were discussed with interested Member States as possible initiatives to be pursued during thematic debate on management reform in the General Assembly on April 8-9, 2008.

7.(U) Guidance Request. USUN requests Department's views on the mandate review methodology and requests guidance on how to proceed in the meeting of the Informal Plenary on March 17, 2007 and beyond.

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